
Sichos in English Classics 35

**Go Forth
and Multiply!**



**Shabbos Parshas Noach,
2nd Day of Rosh Chodesh MarCheshvan,
5741 (1980)**



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IN PLACE OF AN INTRODUCTION

At the Shloshim of R' Yonah Avtzon A"H, Director of Sichos in English, a resolution was taken to reprint the original weekly Sichos in English publications.

To fulfill this, a weekly booklet including a translation of a *farbrengen* as it was first published will be distributed. Our intention is to reprint the entire set in the near future.

Following the Sichos we will include an addendum with pictures, notes, and insights into the process of its publication.

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GO FORTH AND MULTIPLY!



Shabbos Parshas Noach, 2nd Day of Rosh Chodesh MarCheshvan, 5741 (1980)

A NEW WORLD

3. The contents of this week's Parshah, Parshas Noach, expresses the same idea as that previously discussed. After the destruction wrought by the flood, those who survived, Noach and his sons, "saw a new world." This not only reinforces the lesson learned from Rosh Chodesh that a Jew's service must be in a completely new fashion, but also teaches us the difference between Cheshvan and Tishrei. The Alter Rebbe writes, on Rosh Hashanah "a new light descends that is higher than any previous light," illuminating the world. In the month of Cheshvan however, the service must be such that they "saw a new world;" the world *itself* must be made anew.

Chassidus explains that "G-d remembered Noach" because of the "essential loftiness of a Jew's soul." This verse and the following "you also remembered Noach with love," is therefore said in the Musaf prayer of Rosh Chodesh, referring to the "inner essential love" for all Jewish souls, which is revealed in every generation. Hence, all things relating to Noach after the flood apply to every Jew. Thus, after the month of Tishrei, when we come to the month of Cheshvan and start the service of "Ya'akov went on his way" — to transform "his way" to "G-d's way" — it must be such service which transforms the world into a new one — "he saw a new world."¹

This is not a theoretical matter pertaining only to certain individuals, for every Jew is capable of carrying out the above directives. Simply stated: do not think that the service of Tishrei suffices for the later months. Instead, one's service must now be

1. Similar to the concept propounded by the Besht, based on the verse "Blow on the new moon the Shofar." Grammatically, the verse should read "Blow the Shofar on the new moon." This teaches us that one should always perform good deeds as if for the first time, and not as an oft-performed ritual.

performed with renewed energy, renewed enthusiasm, renewed pleasure, and renewed joy. A Jew surely has the ability to carry out this task, for “I (G-d) do not demand (that the Jews carry out tasks) according to My ability, but according to their abilities.” And when one makes the effort to create the world anew, then the absolute true renewal which comes from G-d alone is also effected.

Despite all the accomplishments of Tishrei, one small action in Cheshvan can make all the difference. The Rambam states that “one should regard oneself and the entire world as being equally balanced between being meritorious and the opposite. One good action can tilt the individual and the entire world towards the meritorious side, and effect salvation for himself and it.” Salvation means the redemption, and after the service of Tishrei which brought the world to an even balance, even one good deed can cause the world to be meritorious, and the redemption will come.

From the “new world” of Parshas Noach we progress to Parshas Lech Lecha, the first words of which are “Get yourself out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house.” Chassidus explains this to mean that one should disencumber oneself of one’s personal characteristics, accustomed ways, and upbringing, and go to the place that G-d will show him. His going should lead him to begin his service to his Creator anew, affecting both himself and his environment, until the coming of our righteous redeemer, when “kingship will be the L-rd’s.”

* * *

NOACH’S FEAR AND HASHEM’S COMMAND

4. When the flood waters had receded, G-d commanded Noach to “Go forth from the ark, you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons wives with you.” The departure was to be such that each man exited together with his wife, unlike their entrance into the ark when the men entered separately from the women — “Noach went in, and his sons, and his wife, and the wives of his sons with him into the ark.” The difference being, that upon entering “they were forbidden marital relations since the world was steeped in grief,” whereas when leaving “He permitted marital relations.” Yet, when Noach and his family actually left the ark, we find that in contradiction to G-d’s

command, the men left separately from the women: “Noach went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and the wives of his sons with him.”

Rashi, in a later passage (9:9) provides the answer to this problem. He states: “Noach was apprehensive about engaging in being fruitful and multiplying until the Holy One blessed be He promised not to destroy the world again.” Noach was worried that if he were to have children and re-populate the world, they would eventually sin, and G-d would again send a flood to destroy them. Therefore, upon exiting from the ark, the men went separately from the women. In doing so, he was not violating G-d’s words that the men should exit together with their wives, for he interpreted the words “go forth from the ark, you, your wife, and your sons, and the wives of your sons” to mean not a *command* to engage in cohabitation, but rather *permission* to do what was, until now, forbidden.² And being afraid that having children would lead to another flood, he chose not to take advantage of the permission granted. [Later, however, G-d expressly commanded him to be fruitful and multiply.]

Yet all is not clear. How could Noach, a “righteous and whole-hearted man,” solely because of his fears and worries, ignore the mode of exit from the ark as told to him by G-d? When King Chizkiyahu prophetically saw that one of his descendents would be Menashe, a wicked person, he did not wish to engage in cohabitation, and for this he was punished. King Chizkiyahu was *certain* that if he cohabited, Menashe would result, and still he was punished for not wishing to have children. Yet Noach refrained from following G-d’s orders only because it *might* result in a second destruction!

One of the possible answers is, Noach thoroughly understood the value of life, and thus the gravity of putting a life in danger, or even the possibility of danger. He had just witnessed the destruction of the entire human race, together with large segments of the animal, plant and mineral world. Knowing what having children could lead to, and lacking certain knowledge that there would not be another flood, it was impossible for him immediately upon leaving the ark, to proceed to have more children.

2. There are many instances in Torah, where G-d’s words are meant not as a command, but as permission. In Parshas Bereishis, G-d told Adam to “have dominion over the fish of the sea.” Obviously this does not mean that one *must* seek out all the fish in the sea and rule over them. It means simply that G-d gave man the power, if he wishes to do so.

Despite Noah's objections, G-d instructed him that this was not the proper way, but instead he should "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." We who do not have any of Noah's reasons for worrying, and must fulfill the first commandment of the Torah to bear children, most certainly have no reason whatsoever to refrain from having children. All arguments of economic difficulties are spurious, for G-d provides sustenance for one and all.

Another reason for having children is that "Moshiach will not come until all the souls will have descended into bodies." Through having children, one speeds up the redemption. One need only trust G-d, and then one fulfills the Mitzvah of "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" with joy and delight. This joy and delight breaks through all barriers, providing all things necessary for the husband and wife.

Every Mitzvah causes an effect in the world. Procreation is the only way to effect the wondrous action of revealing the Power of the Infinite in the world. One's child then has children, further revealing the Power of the Infinite, and so on for all generations.

Thus a great merit and obligation rests upon each of us to fulfill the Mitzvah of populating the earth. Especially now when we need the redemption, and children are demanding that "we want Moshiach now and we don't want to wait" — so why not do a Jewish child a favor, and help bring Moshiach by causing all the souls to descend into bodies! With trust in G-d we shall advance to greet Moshiach "with our sons, our daughters, our youth, and our elders." [The Rebbe Shlita requested that all children should sing "We Want Moshiach Now."]

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WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED IN THE ARK

5. There is a rather perplexing problem in this week's Parshah. There were all species of beasts in the ark, both herbivorous and carnivorous. Yet Rashi makes no comment explaining how all the different species were able to co-exist peacefully without attacking each other. As regards to *entering* the ark, there is no problem. Rashi, on the verse "of the fruit after their kind and of the cattle after their kind" states that "they came of their own accord and all that the ark would receive Noah brought in." Noah certainly was not able to go and round up

all the species of animals and bring them into the ark. Instead they came of their own accord, obedient to G-d's command. G-d wished them all to be saved from the flood, and so they most certainly would not have attacked and killed each other upon entering the ark.³

The same cannot be said of the duration of their stay in the ark for a complete year. Surely during that period of time the more ferocious beasts, in the natural order of things, would have attacked the weaker ones. Nor can one postulate that the natural order was suspended during their stay in the ark, for the Medrash relates that when the lion's food was late in coming, it bit Noach — a natural act of a hungry lion. If it could bite Noach who fed him every day, just because he was late once, then certainly it would have attacked and eaten a weaker animal when hungry!

The answer is found in Rashi's explanation of the verse "you shall make quarters in the ark." He interprets the word "quarters" to mean not merely partitioned spaces, but "separate rooms for all the beasts and cattle." A room is a sturdy structure equipped with a lock, capable of holding even the most ferocious of beasts. Noach made sure that the separate rooms for the beasts and cattle were kept locked at all times, thus preventing any attacks.

We can learn a valuable lesson from this. One may think it quite sufficient to save the animals from destruction, without going to any more trouble. Yet G-d instructed Noach that it would not suffice to merely coop the animals up in cages; he must instead provide rooms for them. If so with regard to beasts, how much more so with human beings, especially Jews. "You shall love your fellowman as yourself" applies to every Jew, no matter what his situation in life, for "who can know their greatness and excellence in their root and source in the living G-d?" Every Jew is "full with Mitzvos as a pomegranate [is with seeds]," and "every Jew has a share in the world to come." Not only must one save a fellow Jew from the "flood," but also prepare a "room" for him — supply him with all his needs. G-d, Himself, also grants a Jew his needs for a long and healthy life, and thus fortified, he performs his duty, preparing the way for the speedy coming of our righteous Moshiach.

3. A simpler reason for this is that it is the nature of animals, when fleeing from a common danger (e.g. fire), to run all together in one direction without attacking each other. But since a five-year old has no knowledge of animals' nature, Rashi writes the alternative explanation (that they were obedient to G-d's will).

לזכרון

מרת **רישא**

בת ר' **אברהם אבא** ע"ה

נפטרה יום ש"ק פ' נח, ד' מרחשון תשע"ז



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